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Mr. S. Satyamurti :—" May I know then whether the statement which I read out is accepted by the hon. Minister? The recognized policy has been the policy of the Government which the hon. the ex-Minister laid down. May I ask whether the present Ministry accepts that as the policy of the Government?"

The hon. Mr. S. Muthiah Mudaliyar :—" That is the policy of the Government whether it is definite or not."

Progress made towards prohibition in the Madras Presidency.

*77 *Q.*—Mr. S. Satyamurti : Will the hon. the Minister for Public Health be pleased to state—

(*a*) whether after his taking office he has done anything towards prohibition in this Province;

(*b*) if so, the nature and the extent of that action ; and

(*c*) if no action has been taken, the reasons therefor?

A.—(*a*), (*b*) & (*c*) The Excise Advisory Committee decided that the practical way of working towards the goal was educating the masses in the evils of drink and creating popular opinion and support against it and Government are considering schemes for propaganda work.

Mr. S. Satyamurti :—" May I know what steps he has actually taken, apart from getting proposals or schemes for starting educative propaganda, to start prohibition? May I know, apart from that, whether he has taken any specific steps towards prohibition, temperance, local option or reduction of shops?"

The hon. Mr. S. Muthiah Mudaliyar :—" Shops have been reduced; shops which were open have been closed. That is a definite step."

Mr. S. Satyamurti :—" How many shops and in what districts?"

The hon. Mr. S. Muthiah Mudaliyar :—" Notice; at least twenty shops."

Mr. J. A. Saldanha :—" May I know whether any steps have been taken as proposed by the policy declared by his predecessor to increase the areas of prohibition?"

The hon. Mr. S. Muthiah Mudaliyar :—" Prohibition is to be reached by gradual stages; the reduction of 20 shops to 10 shops is a step in that direction."

Mr. A. Ranganatha Mudaliyar :—" How many of the shops closed are shops which could not be sold in auction?"

The hon. Mr. S. Muthiah Mudaliyar :—" Notice."

Diwan Bahadur R. N. Arogyaswami Mudaliyar :—" May I ask the hon. Minister whether he has rejected the resolution of this House which lays down a definite policy?"

The hon. Mr. S. Muthiah Mudaliyar :—" A policy has been laid down by this House to be reached by successive stages within a period of twenty years. The Excise Advisory Committee which consists of hon. Members of this House were asked to submit practical proposals to give effect to that policy. Their proposals have been accepted."

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Diwan Bahadur R. N. Arogyaswami Mudaliyar :—" May I know whether the opinion of the Advisory Committee is unanimous, because I understand it was not unanimous ? "

The hon. Mr. S. Muthiah Mudaliyar :—" Does the hon. Member want an answer to the question ? I think that the Government state the facts as they are and believe they are so."

Mr. S. Satyamurti :—" May I know specifically now whether the Government have or have not accepted the time-limit of twenty years which this House has adopted by a resolution ? "

The hon. Mr. S. Muthiah Mudaliyar :—" The hon. Member for the University may draw any inference he likes from the answers given."

Mr. G. Harisarvottama Rao :—" May I know whether the hon. the Minister has taken any step to find out by all means available to him whether there is any limited area—the information may be correct or incorrect, may be complete or incomplete—in which prohibition can be introduced ? "

The hon. Mr. S. Muthiah Mudaliyar :—" It is easy to give the information whether it is correct or not. But the Government cannot act unless the information is correct. So we have to find out the correct information."

Mr. S. Satyamurti :—" May I know whether the hon. the Minister for Excise has accepted or rejected or he has made up his mind on the time limit for the attainment of the goal of total prohibition which has been recommended by this Council ? "

The hon. Mr. S. Muthiah Mudaliyar :—" The Government will take such steps as they are advised to take. If total prohibition can be reached within a period of twenty years, there it is ; if it can be reached within a period of ten years instead of within twenty years, there it is. If it cannot be done, there it is not."

Mr. K. R. Karant :—" May I know whether the hon. Minister considers the unanimous opinion of the municipalities and local bodies is a sufficient indication of the popular opinion in favour of prohibition ? "

The hon. Mr. S. Muthiah Mudaliyar :—" To a certain extent it is."

Mr. G. Harisarvottama Rao :—" May I ask the hon. Minister for Excise whether he will take steps to enquire into the possibilities of introducing total prohibition into any limited area he thinks fit ? "

The hon. Mr. S. Muthiah Mudaliyar :—" It all depends upon the extent of the limit the hon. Member is able to point out."

Mr. S. Satyamurti :—" May I know, Sir, whether the steps which the Government propose to take or are taking are intended to bring about prohibition within a period of twenty years or ten years or within any definite period of time ? " 11-30 a.m.

The hon. Mr. S. Muthiah Mudaliyar :—" Whether it will have that effect, it remains to be seen."

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Mr. S. Satyamurti :—" I am asking, Sir, whether the steps which the Government are now taking or propose to take or intended by them to bring about—I am asking a question of fact—prohibition within a period of ten or twenty years or within any definite time-limit ? "

The hon. Mr. S. Muthiah Mudaliyar :—" To carry out the time-limit which has been prescribed by the resolution passed by the Council, this policy is being pursued by the Government."

Rao Bahadur C. S. Ratnasabapathi Mudaliyar :—" The answer says that ' Government are considering schemes for propaganda work '. When Government are convineed of the evils of drink—and Government are the custodians of the safety of the masses—what is the necessity for further propaganda work ? "

The hon. Mr. S. Muthiah Mudaliyar :—" For the reason that a man may take interest in his neighbour and ask him to desist from the evil."

Minimising the evil of drink among Adi-Dravidas.

* 78 Q.—Mr. A. B. Shetty : Will the hon. the Minister for Public Health be pleased to state—

(a) whether the Government are aware that Adi-Dravida men and women spend at least half their wages on drink ; and

(b) the steps taken by Government to minimise the evil of drink among these people ?

A.—(a) The Government are not aware that the fact is as suggested.

(b) The Government have endeavoured to control the liquor trade and minimise the evils of drink by regulating the sale and consumption of liquor, by levying high taxation and by reducing the number of shops and by seeing that they are located in suitable sites. With regard to the depressed classes in particular, Government have directed that as far as possible shops should not be located in or within two furlongs from cheris.

Mr. A. B. Shetty :— " With reference to the answers to questions 76 and 77, may I know whether the Government propose to ask the Labour Department or the Public Health Department to do propaganda work with a view to discourage the drink habit among the Adi-Dravidas ? "

The hon. Mr. S. Muthiah Mudaliyar :—" Every Department of Government, as far as they can find time to do it, has been asked about it."

Mr. J. A. Saldanha :—" May I know whether the officers of the Health Department have been encouraged to give advice ? This is not a Department like the Revenue Department ; it is under the hon. Minister."

The hon. Mr. S. Muthiah Mudaliyar :—" I am afraid the hon. Member from Mangalore has not been following the proceedings of the Council. The prohibition against the officers of the Department doing it has been removed and they are now doing it."